



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDEQ JULY 11 UPDATE ON OIL MATERIAL IN MISSISSIPPI

BILOXI, Miss. – Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) staff through aerial surveillance with the Mississippi National Guard, MDEQ response staff, and Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Teams (SCAT) have observed the following Sunday (as of 7:00 p.m.) and sent to Unified Command for review and appropriate response:

Information from MDEQ staff:

- Tar patties ranging in size from one-half inch to six inches in diameter with coverage of about 15 percent along the beach in Pass Christian. (N 30 19.282, W 89 13.431)
- Sporadic tar balls along beach in Pass Christian. (N 30 19.138, W 89 13.790)
- Reports of sheen along Graveline Bayou in Gautier. (N 30°22.55, W 88°39.582)
- Most of the beaches between the Beau Rivage and Gulfport Harbor are clean, except for the following areas which have sporadic coverage of oil patties. (N 30 23.456, W88 57.650; N30 22.890, W89 01.570; N30 22.753, W 89 02.260; N 30 22.247, W 89 04.434)
- SCAT teams on Horn Island reported large scattered tar balls and older mousse patties ranging in size from one to 20 cm in diameter with patchy coverage along an area about 20 to 30 meters wide.
- SCAT team performed assessments along southwestern shoreline of Cat Island. The team observed patches of tar balls, patties, submerged oil, and mousse in these areas.
- SCAT team performed assessments along the south shore of Horn Island starting at MSJK-1 Segment 1 and walked east along the coastline. In segment 1, tar balls and patties were found at a frequency of less than one percent in the middle and upper tidal zones and 10 percent in the super tidal zone. Some tar balls were found to be under the sand at a depth of about two inches. In segment 2 to 4 tar balls and patties were found at a frequency of one to two percent in the super tidal zone at a range of about 15 to 30 foot band width throughout the segments and less than one in the upper and middle tidal zones. In segment 3, oil was being buried by sand. In segment 5, tar balls and patties were found in the super tidal pool at a frequency of 50 percent in a 40 yard by 10 yard section. Surrounding super tidal zone had a one percent frequency of coverage and less than one percent in the middle and upper tidal zones. In segment 6, the upper super tidal zone contained a one yard band approximately 120 yards long which displayed coverage of 50 percent tar balls and patties. Oil was found under the sand at a depth of less than 2 inches. The rest of the segment was comprised of 5 percent coverage in the super tidal zone in a 15 yard band and one percent in upper and middle tidal zones. Segment 7 contained an area of three large patties approximately one square yard each. The super tidal zone contained coverage of five to eight percent along the segment and one percent in the upper and middle zone. In segments 8 and 9 tar balls and patties were found at a frequency of three percent in the super tidal zone and one percent in the upper and middle tidal zones.

Patches of tar balls and weathered oil are skimmed and corralled by Vessels of Opportunity and BP contractors. Skimming is used to remove streams of emulsified oil, tar balls, and tar patties. Tar balls and mousse patties on land are removed with shovels and rakes.

More information and links about MDEQ's and DMR's roles in oil spill response are available at www.deq.state.ms.us/oilspill and www.dmr.state.ms.us/DMR/oil-spill.htm.

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